



Write to Educate

Scholarship Contest Winner

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Essay Topic: Examine the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on our society (human interactions, schooling, the economy, tourism, etc.).

Birthday parades. Toilet-paper shortage. Zoom University. Imagine going back in time, and explaining those phrases to your past self. Crazy, right? The fact is, COVID-19 blazed through 2020 like a wildfire, and “normal” human interaction got absolutely scorched by the flames. Weddings, proms, and graduations were canceled. Theme parks, schools, and restaurants were shut down. Even gestures as simple as a handshake were suddenly forbidden, leaving countless people feeling totally isolated. But, those negative effects are not stone monuments, to be held in place for the rest of eternity. While the COVID-19 pandemic has undoubtedly been difficult, I believe that the virus will ultimately produce many positive impacts on human interactions.

For starters, this pandemic has reaffirmed the value of relationships. Ever since COVID-19 first hit American soil, in-person contact between humans has become more and more scarce. It is now somewhat rare to greet a stranger with a handshake, or hug a grandparent you haven’t seen in a while. Although COVID-19 is certainly to blame for some of the decline in physical contact among people, I believe that society was becoming increasingly detached before the virus took hold. Think about it: was 2019 really that great? Did we all actually appreciate the opportunity to connect in person, talking and laughing with our loved ones? Or, has the COVID-19 pandemic incited a realization in all of us that we shouldn’t have taken those times for granted? You see, this virus has shaken up the ground that we as Americans were so firmly rooted in prior to March of 2020. The pandemic has forced us to take a step back and consider why a lot of us felt an incomprehensible emptiness during quarantine; it has woken us up and reminded us that in order to be happy, we need to be around people, cultivating relationships. That’s a pretty important lesson.

COVID-19 has also exposed the dangers of a completely technological society. Contrary to what many science fiction novels would describe, wholly virtual businesses, schools, and churches are not flawlessly ideal. Computers crash. Connections are slow. Eyes grow tired from the strain of screens. Before the pandemic, many people believed that an all-virtual society would be utopia, free from the constant errors made by imperfect humans. However, the shift to this type of futuristic civilization has proven difficult. Simple business functions like meetings are now at the mercy of technology, proving to people everywhere that there will always be value to in-person interaction. No one’s face has ever frozen mid-sentence in a face-to-face meeting, that’s for sure. The hardships humans have endured as a result of unreliable technology during the COVID-19 pandemic are certainly teaching us that good, old-fashioned, in-person conversations will never go out of style.

Perhaps even more paramount, the COVID-19 pandemic has subjected humans to an extreme test of will and teamwork... and we’ve passed. Although we have been forced to abandon “normal” interactions, life has gone on. Millions of healthcare professionals risked their own safety in order to care for the sick. Billions of dollars have been donated for COVID-19 research and relief efforts. Families and friends have organized numerous socially distanced celebrations and gatherings to support their loved ones. Humans have come together in countless ways to fight COVID-19, proving that we are capable of working together for good.

Yes, COVID-19 is terrible. Yes, COVID-19 has negatively impacted nearly every person on the planet. Yes, there seems to be no end in sight. But, we are learning. Humans are adapting to the never-ending stream of curveballs thrown by the virus. We are realizing that technology isn’t everything, that a hug means a whole lot more than a tweet, and that we are ultimately stronger when we work together.

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